

Mumps

What is mumps?

Mumps is a contagious viral disease that can infect people of any age. It is more common in school-aged children and young adults.

One of the main symptoms is swelling of one or more of the salivary glands on either side of the face, near the ear and mouth.

How can I get mumps?

Mumps is not common in Canada due to high vaccination rates. It usually occurs in unvaccinated people who have traveled to areas where mumps is common.

The virus that causes mumps disease spreads through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You can also become infected through direct contact with the saliva of an infected person through kissing or sharing items such as food, drinks, cigarettes, and drinking bottles.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Some people with mumps have no symptoms at all. However, they are still infectious and can spread the disease to other people.

Symptoms can appear from 12 to 25 days after contact with someone who is infected with mumps. Usually, symptoms start about 16 to 18 days after contact with the infected person. At this time, symptoms are not very specific and may include:

- headache
- dry mouth
- tiredness
- loss of appetite

Next, the infected person may develop an earache and jaw pain upon opening the mouth/chewing. A day or so later, swelling of the salivary glands near the ear and mouth appear and may last for two or more days.

When is someone with mumps contagious?

Mumps virus can be infectious for about seven days before salivary glands begin to swell and for at least five days afterwards.

Who is at risk of getting mumps?

Most people born in Canada before 1970 are likely to be protected from mumps.

People at risk include anyone born in Canada in 1970 or later who:

- have not received two doses of mumps-containing vaccine, and
- have never had mumps disease

Infants under the age of 12 months are most at risk because the vaccination is not given until children are 12 months of age or older. Immunization of older children and adults helps protect infants.

What can happen if I get mumps?

Most people who get mumps are sick for up to 10 days and then recover completely. Symptoms are more severe for infants and adults.

Complications of mumps include:

- pneumonia (lung infection)
- meningitis (swelling/inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal cord)
- encephalitis (swelling/inflammation of the brain)
- middle ear infections
- seizures and convulsions
- deafness (usually temporary)
- painful swelling of the testicles in teenage boys and men, which may cause sterility
- painful swelling of the ovaries in women and girls, which may cause sterility

Mumps can cause serious complications in:

- Infants under one year of age
- Pregnant women in their first trimester as they are more at risk of miscarriage (mumps disease has not been associated with birth defects)
- People who have problems with their immune system as they may have difficulty fighting off the infection

What should I do if I have symptoms of mumps?

If you think you have mumps, stay home, and call your health care provider's office. Tell them about your symptoms and that you may have been exposed to mumps disease. The office needs to arrange appropriate infection control measures for the time of your appointment so that the infection is not passed to others.

Someone who has mumps should stay home from daycare, pre-school, school, or work for **five** days after the swelling develops.

Avoid activities such as kissing or sharing food, drinks, cigarettes, drinking bottles, or musical instruments where you may come into contact with saliva. When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue,

or use your sleeve. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

Mumps can be diagnosed by the common signs and symptoms. However, laboratory tests may include:

- blood samples
- a urine sample
- a swab of the inside of your cheek

Can I get mumps more than once?

No. People who have had mumps are generally protected for life.

How is mumps treated?

There is no specific treatment for mumps. Most people can recover at home. Medications can be taken to relieve some symptoms. Please speak with your health care provider.

What can I do if I come into contact with someone who has mumps?

If you come into contact with someone who has mumps, call your doctor and tell them that you have may have been exposed to mumps disease.

If you have never received the mumps vaccine you may be excluded from school, daycare, work or group activities.

Getting the mumps vaccine after contact with an infected person will not prevent infection from the current exposure. However, if you don't become infected, mumps vaccine is recommended after contact to provide protection against future exposures.

What can I do to prevent mumps?

People born before 1970 in Canada are generally considered protected from mumps.

Everyone else should have at least one dose of the mumps vaccine, given after his or her first birthday. Two doses of vaccine are required for full protection. Children should have both doses of mumps vaccine by four to six years of age.

People born between 1970 and 1990 may have only received one dose of mumps vaccine and should check their immunization records. A second dose of vaccine should be considered for full protection. Discuss this with your health care provider.

Who can I call for more information?

For more information talk to your health care provider or call the Halton Region Health Department.

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